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Letter dated 23 December 2002 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 20 December 2002, which I received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. **Annan**

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Annex

Letter dated 20 December 2002 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolution 1088 (1996), I attach the November monthly report on Stabilization Force operations (see enclosure). I would appreciate your making this report available to the Council.

(*Signed*) George **Robertson**

Enclosure

Monthly report to the United Nations on Stabilization Force operations

1. Over the reporting period (1 to 30 November 2002) there were just over 14,000 troops deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, with contributions from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies and from 15 non-NATO countries.

2. During the period under review, the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina remained stable.

Security

3. The Stabilization Force (SFOR) continues to contribute towards the maintenance of a safe and secure environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina: monitor compliance by the entity armed forces; conduct inspections and consolidation of weapons storage sites; provide support to the international organizations working in theatre, and to the Federation authorities in collecting weapons and ammunition in the framework of Operation Harvest; and monitor possible terrorist-related threats throughout the country.

4. Preparations for the transition from the International Police Task Force (IPTF) to the European Union Police Mission (EUPM) are continuing. It is expected that the memorandum of understanding/technical agreement between SFOR and EUPM will be finalized by mid-December. The first group of police officers from EUPM received initial training during the reporting period, and most have been sent as liaison officers to the multinational divisions. Information briefings on EUPM's role and capabilities have been provided to the multinational divisions and lower echelons. SFOR is encouraging other international organizations to request similar briefings so that they can become familiar with the new role of EUPM.

5. A large quantity of ammunition of various calibres, as well as grenades, anti-aircraft rounds and mines, was collected across the country during the reporting period. Most weapons appear to have been left over from the 1992-1995 war.

6. SFOR continued Operation Harvest during November. In the course of the year, items collected included 7,965 small arms (rifles, pistols and revolvers); 2,256,948 rounds of ammunition smaller than 20 millimetres; 19,285 rounds of ammunition between 20 and 76 millimetres; 2,468 rounds of ammunition larger than 76 millimetres; 35,385 hand grenades; 4,120 mines; 8,106.27 kilograms of explosives; and 47,492 other items (mortars, mortar rounds, rifle grenades, and hand-made ordnance).

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

7. The entity armed forces carried out regular training activities during the reporting period, which were in compliance with the military provisions of the Dayton Peace Agreement. A serious violation was, however, reported at Zaluzani barracks on 6 November, during a routine inspection of seven Republika Srpska Army (VRS) Gazelle Medevac helicopters. All seven retained fittings and equipment that would allow them to be quickly converted to attack helicopters. Although SFOR considered this matter to be an act of non-compliance, an agreement was reached, in full cooperation with VRS, to remove the equipment in

question. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe will, in due course, certify the re-categorization of the helicopters.

8. During the period under review, SFOR monitored a total of 137 training and movement activities; 72 by VRS and 65 by the Army of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (AFBiH).

9. A total of 329 mine-clearing activities were monitored over this period, 118 by VRS and 211 by AFBiH.

10. SFOR also carried out 76 inspections and verifications of weapons and storage sites, 40 relating to VRS and 36 to AFBiH.

11. In the programme for the restructuring of the entity armed forces, the Federation Armed Forces will have achieved its reduction goals by the end of 2002, well in advance of the 2005 target date. The armed forces are, however, too large to be sustained by the federal budget. Consequently, SFOR has put forward the concept of having an active reserve force. The proposal has been well received by the local authorities, although no concrete steps have as yet been taken to define the structure or target dates.

Cooperation with international organizations

12. Within its capabilities and in accordance with its mandate, SFOR continues to provide assistance to the international organizations in theatre, including the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, IPTF, the Office of the High Representative, the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, OSCE and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

13. On 27 November, SFOR provided overflight support to the Tribunal following the discovery of a mass grave near Zvornik in the Republika Srpska. It is expected that exhumation of the site — which is believed to contain up to 600 bodies, and to be the largest mass grave found in Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1996 — will begin in spring 2003. In the meantime, SFOR will, at the request of the Tribunal, provide appropriate support to prevent any tampering with the grave site.

Outlook

14. The security situation is expected to remain stable.